

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An airborne meter communication system comprising:
an airborne platform movable through a flight path and including a first radio frequency transceiver adapted to transmit a meter interrogation signal at a predetermined waypoint along the flight path; and
a ground based utility meter including a second radio frequency transceiver adapted to transmit meter data in response to receipt of the meter interrogation signal, wherein the airborne platform is adapted to receive the data and to transmit the meter data to a ground based station adapted to receive the data from the airborne platform and transmit data to the airborne platform, wherein the data transmitted to the airborne platform includes one of a connect command, a disconnect command and a flight path.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the data related to the meter includes data regarding one of usage patterns, total power consumed, service interrupt alerts, and power outage data.
3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the data includes one of usage data and meter identification data.
4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first radio frequency transceiver includes a directional antenna.
5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first radio frequency transceiver includes adaptive antenna control.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the airborne platform further includes a computer in communication with the first radio frequency transceiver.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the airborne platform further includes a navigation system in communication with the computer and wherein the computer is adapted to control the first radio frequency transceiver based upon data received from the navigation system and upon the location of the ground based utility meter.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the computer controls the first radio frequency transceiver based further upon an antenna orientation on the second radio frequency transceiver and upon any obstruction to communication between the first radio frequency transceiver and the second radio frequency transceiver.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the airborne platform further comprises data storage for storing the data related to the meter.

Claim 10 (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[10]] 1, further comprising a computer controlled display.

Claim 12 (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[10]] 1, wherein the ground based station is adapted to transmit data to the airborne platform by one of a RF transmission and a physical media.

Claim 14 (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[10]] 1, wherein the ground based station is adapted to receive the data via radio frequency communication from the airborne platform.

16. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising a network operations center adapted to selectively communicate with the ground based station.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, wherein the network operations center is further adapted to selectively communicate with a utility company.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[16]] 37, wherein the network operations center comprises:

- a local area network;
- an application/database server in communication with the local area network;
- a firewall in communication with the local area network; and
- a router in communication with the firewall.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the network operations center further comprises a modem for selective communication with the ground based station.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[16]] 37, wherein the application/database server comprises:

- an application processor; and
- a database in communication with the application processor.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the database includes meter related information and wherein the application processor is adapted to separate the meter related information into segregated files in the database.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the application processor is adapted to segregate the information based upon the meter identification.

23. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the application processor is adapted to permit query based data calls to the database.

24. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the application/database server comprises:

an application server in communication with the local area network; and
a database server in communication with the local area network.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the database server comprises a database that includes information regarding one of usage data, missed read reports, out of cycle read requirements, power outage reports and alerts.

26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the network operations center is further adapted to selectively communicate with a plurality of utilities and wherein the network operations center includes an application/database server for each of the plurality of utilities.

27. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the network operations center further comprises an operator display and wherein the application/database server is adapted to route meter data regarding one of power outage and power interrupt information to the operator display.

28. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the ground based utility meter is in communication with one of another meter, a home security system, a home appliance, a home network, and a home computer.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for airborne meter communication, comprising the steps of:

receiving data, from a navigation system, into an airborne platform;

transmitting a meter interrogation signal from [[an]] the airborne platform, wherein the airborne platform includes a computer adapted to transmit

the meter interrogation signal based upon data received from the navigation system and upon the location of a ground utility based meter;

receiving the meter interrogation signal from the airborne platform in
[[a]] the ground based utility meter;

transmitting data from the ground based utility meter in response to
receiving the meter interrogation signal;

receiving the data from the ground based utility meter in the airborne
platform; and

transmitting the data from the airborne platform.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of receiving
the data from the airborne platform in a ground based station.

31. (Original) A method for airborne meter communication, comprising the
steps of:

transmitting one of a meter connect command and a disconnect command
from an airborne platform;

receiving one of a meter connect command and a disconnect command
from the airborne platform in a ground based utility meter; and

one of connecting service in response to the connect command and
disconnecting service in response to the disconnect command.

Claim 32-35 (Canceled)

36. (New) An airborne meter communication system comprising:

an airborne platform movable through a flight path and including a first
radio frequency transceiver adapted to transmit a meter interrogation signal at a
predetermined waypoint along the flight path; and

a ground based utility meter including a second radio frequency
transceiver adapted to transmit meter data in response to receipt of the meter

interrogation signal, wherein the airborne platform is adapted to receive the data and to transmit the meter data to a ground station;

wherein the airborne platform further includes a computer in communication with the first radio frequency transceiver; and

a navigation system in communication with the computer and wherein the computer is adapted to control the first radio frequency transceiver based upon data received from the navigation system and upon the location of the ground based utility meter.

37. (New) An airborne meter communication system comprising:

an airborne platform movable through a flight path and including a first radio frequency transceiver adapted to transmit a meter interrogation signal at a predetermined waypoint along the flight path;

a ground based utility meter including a second radio frequency transceiver adapted to transmit meter data in response to receipt of the meter interrogation signal, wherein the airborne platform is adapted to receive the data and to transmit the meter data;

a ground based station adapted to receive the meter data from the airborne platform; and

a network operations center adapted to selectively communicate with the ground based station.